

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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P R 170849Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3656

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 17092

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: "LOCKHEED" ELECTION

SUMMARY: CAMPAIGN FOR DECEMBER 5 LOWER HOUSE ELECTION
OFFICIALLY GOT UNDERWAY NOVEMBER 15 WHEN 899 CANDIDATES
FORMALLY FILED TO RUN FOR 511 SEATS OF EXPANDED LOWER HOUSE
AND PARTY LEADERS AND CANDIDATES DELIVERED KICKOFF SPEECHES.
PRINCIPAL THEMES OF CAMPAIGN APPEAR LIKELY TO BE LOCKHEED
AND STATE OF ECONOMY. ATTENTION WILL ALSO FOCUS ON IMPACT
OF SPLIT OF LDP LEADERSHIP BETWEEN MIKI AND FORMER DEPUTY
PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA. CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY IS MOST
PROBABLY NOT IN DANGER, BUT ITS ABILITY TO CONTROL FULLY
ORGANIZATION OF LOWER HOUSE COULD BE. OUTCOME COULD
ENGOURAGE FUTURE COOPERATION AMONG NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSI-
TION PARTIES AND WILL BE MAJOR ELEMENT IN LDP LEADERSHIP
STRUGGLE WHICH IS EXPECTED TO RE-IGNITE IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

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1. ISSUES: OPPOSITION, AIDED BY MEDIA, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO MAKE LOCKHEED SCANDAL AND CONSERVATIVE CORRUPTION MAJOR ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN. EMPHASIS VARIES IN PROPORTION TO DISTANCE FROM TOKYO, HOWEVER, AS OSAKA AND SAPPORO REPORT THAT ECONOMIC ISSUES HAVE TOP PLACE IN KANSAI AND NORTHERN JAPAN. OPENING SALVOS BY ALL OPPOSITION LEADERS STRONGLY ATTACKED LDP FOR "MONEY POLITICS" AND RECURRING LDP SCANDALS. TO DRAMATIZE CORRUPTION THEME, JSP CHAIRMAN NARITA TRAVELLED TO DISTRICT OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER TANAKA, WHERE HE DELIVERED HIS OPENING SPEECH BEFORE CROWD OF 1,200 AND BLUNTLY DEMANDED TANAKA'S WITHDRAWAL FROM RACE. IN ATTACKING CONSERVATIVES' MANAGEMENT OF ECONOMY, OPPOSITION IS DEMANDING IMMEDIATE PERSONAL INCOME TAX CUT AND MORE AID FOR ELDERLY, AND HAS CRITICIZED LDP FOR FAILURE TO RESPOND TO TYPHOON AND COLD WEATHER DAMAGE TO CROPS.

2. IN HIS OPENING SALVO, PRIME MINISTER MIKI HAS ASSERTED THAT ELECTION WOULD BE "JUDGMENT" ON HIS ADMINISTRATION. HE POINTED TO "UNPRECEDENTED" SUCCESS OF LOCKHEED INVESTIGATION UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESS IN KEEPING INFLATION IN CHECK WHILE PROMOTING ECONOMIC RECOVERY. MIKI STRESSED NEED FOR CONSERVATIVE UNITY AND ARGUED STRONGLY THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES DID NOT HAVE ABILITY TO GOVERN.

3. FUKUDA-MIKI RIVALRY (SEE TOKYO 17043): IN SEPARATE OPENING ADDRESS IN OSAKA (WHERE HE HAS RELIED HEAVILY FOR BUSINESS COMMUNITY SUPPORT) FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA BEGAN TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR POST-ELECTION RUN FOR PRIME MINISTERSHIP. HE CALLED FOR DISSOLUTION OF LDP FACTIONS AND, CRITICIZED MIKI FOR EMPHASIZING LOCKHEED AT EXPENSE OF "MORE PRESSING AND IMPORTANT" POLICY QUESTIONS, EVEN THOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THERE SHOULD BE NO COVERUP OF LOCKHEED SCANDAL.

4. CANDIDATES: NUMBER OF CANDIDATES, 899, IS SLIGHTLY ABOVE 1972'S 895, BUT BECAUSE THERE ARE 20 MORE SEATS AT STAKE THIS YEAR, CANDIDATE-SEAT RATION HAS ACCORDINGLY FALLEN A BIT FROM 1.81 TO 1.76 TO ONE.
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FOLLOWING IS CANDIDATE BREAKDOWN BY PARTY (1972 NUMBERS IN PARENTHESES):

LDP - 319 (339)
JSP - 162 (161)
JCP - 128 (122)
CGP - 84 (59)
DSP - 51 (65)

NEW LIBERAL CLUB (NLC) - 25 (0)
MINOR CANDIDATES - 17 (15)
INDEPENDENTS - 113 (134)

5. GIVEN EXPANSION OF LOWER HOUSE, REDUCTION BY 20 OF LDP CANDIDATES, EVEN ALLOWING FOR DEFECTIONS TO NLC, REFLECTS SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO AVOID FRAGMENTATION OF CONSERVATIVE VOTE, WHICH IN PAST HAS RESULTED IN LOSS OF CONSERVATIVE SEATS IN JAPAN'S MULTI-MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES. JSP NUMBERS ARE ROUGHLY SAME AS 1972 AND COMMUNISTS AGAIN ARE RUNNING OR BACKING CANDIDATES IN ALL 130 CONSTITUENCIES. INDEPENDENT LIST INCLUDES THREE FORMER LDP MEMBERS UNDER INDICTMENT IN LOCKHEED SCANDAL - TANAKA, HASHIMOTO AND SATO (SAPPORO REPORTS THAT SATO IS EXPECTED TO LOSE). THREE LOCKHEED "GRAY" OFFICIALS -- NIKAIDO, KATO AND FUKUNAGA -- ARE RUNNING AS LDP CANDIDATES, BUT OSAKA REPORTS KATO MAY BE IN TROUBLE. LDP CONTINUES TO DRAW BULK OF CANDIDATES FROM BUREAUCRACY (28 PERCENT) AND LOCAL POLITICS (24 PERCENT), WHILE JSP CANDIDATES COME MAINLY FROM LABOR MOVEMENT (58 PERCENT). BULK OF JCP AND CGP CANDIDATES ARE PARTY-ORGANIZATION MEN (37 PERCENT AND 74 PERCENT, RESPECTIVELY). THOUGH THERE HAS BEEN MUCH TALK ABOUT PUTTING FORTH YOUTHFUL CANDIDATES, MOST LDP AND JSP CANDIDATES ARE IN THEIR FIFTIES; JCP, CGP AND NEW LIBERAL CLUB CANDIDATES TEND TO BE IN FORTIES.

6. ELECTION COOPERATION: DSP AND CGP HAVE AGREED TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER'S CANDIDATES IN TWO DISTRICTS AND IN TWO OTHER DISTRICTS JSP AND CGP WILL SIMILARLY COOPERATE, RAISING POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER JOINT SUPPORT AT LOCAL LEVEL. DESPITE MUCH DISCUSSION, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN NO SURGE OF A MORE GENERAL COOPERATION AMONG OPPOSITION PARTIES. DISAPPOINTED
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BY THIS, JCP CHAIRMAN MIYAMOTO HAS SHARPLY CRITICIZED OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES FOR LACK OF REVOLUTIONARY ZEAL.

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 17092

7. ANTICIPATED RESULTS: LDP HAS SET AN OFFICIAL GOAL OF 280 SEATS (INCLUDING CONSERVATIVE INDEPENDENTS), BUT LEADERS CONTINUE TO SET GOALS HIGHER (PRO-FUKUDA) OR LOWER (PRO-MIKI), DEPENDING ON WHO THEY FAVOR IN PARTY LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE. LDP MUST, HOWEVER, OBTAIN 271 SEATS TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OF ALL LOWER HOUSE LEADERSHIP POSTS. (ONLY 256 REQUIRED FOR ABSOLUTE MAJORITY, BUT CABINET MEMBERS TRADITIONALLY DO NOT VOTE IN COMMITTEE, NOR DO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN EXCEPT TO BREAK TIE; 271 SEATS WOULD THUS ENABLE LDP TO CONTINUE TO CHAIR ALL COMMITTEES.) 275 WOULD STILL BE SAFER, AND 280 WOULD PROBABLY BE REGARDED AS A "VICTORY," ALTHOUGH IT WOULD FALL WELL BELOW PERCENTAGE OF SEATS WON (58 PERCENT INCLUDING INDEPENDENTS) IN 1972 ELECTION. OTHER PARTIES HAVE SET OFFICIAL AND EXPECTED GOALS. JSP IS AIMING AT 130, BUT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY CONSIDER 125 SATISFACTORY -- IT WON 118 SEATS IN 1972; KOMEITO IS COUNTING ON BECOMING SECOND-RANKING OPPOSITION PARTY WINNING 43-45 SEATS, WELL UP FROM ITS PRESENT 30 SEATS; JCP IS HOPING TO INCREASE ITS HOLDINGS BY FOUR OR FIVE -- IT NOW HAS 39 SEATS; DSP WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNTED LUCKY TO HOLD ITW OWN AT 19; AND NLC IS HOPING TO INCREASE ITS SEATS FROM FIVE TO SEVEN.

8. COMMENT: MEDIA IS STRESSING THAT ELECTION PRESENTS PEOPLE WITH OPPORTUNITY TO JUDGE LDP'S PERFORMANCE IN HANDLING LOCKHEED AND THERE WILL BE INTENSE INTEREST IN

LOCKHEED'S EFFECT ON ELECTION RESULTS. ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION HAS OPENED CAMPAIGN WITH FRONTAL ASSAULT ON LDP CORRUPTION, HOWEVER, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHAT EFFECT IT WILL HAVE ON ELECTORATE, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS. ONE OBSERVER HAS COMMENTED THAT, WHILE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN LOCKHEED AND ANGER AT CONSERVATIVES, INDIVIDUAL VOTER'S DECISION IS MORE LIKELY TO BE BASED ON IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO LOCKHEED AS ONE AMONG MANY CONSIDERATIONS, I.E., WHETHER PROTEST VOTE AGAINST LOCKHEED IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HIS CONCEPT OF WHAT CANDIDATES CAN REALISTICALLY DELIVER IN WAY OF BENEFITS TO DISTRICT.

9. NO ONE, OURSELVES INCLUDED, ANTICIPATES DRAMATIC CHANGES TO RESULT FROM THIS ELECTION. THERE WILL BE CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION ABOUT LDP DECLINE IN THE COMING WEEKS, SOME EMANATING FROM LDP CANDIDATES THEMSELVES, BUT CONSERVATIVES SEEM UNLIKELY TO LOSE THEIR LOWER HOUSE MAJORITY.
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NOVEMBER 15 WHEN 899 CANDI
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